

Mayor and Council Communication

DATE: 12/09/25

M&C FILE NUMBER: M&C 25-1095

LOG NAME: 20SW FLOODPLAIN REGULATION UPDATE 2025

SUBJECT

(ALL) Conduct Public Hearing and Adopt Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 "Buildings," Article VIII "Floodplain Provisions," of the City Code to Regulate Valley Storage of Stormwater Citywide

(PUBLIC HEARING - a. Staff Available for Questions: Jennifer Dyke; b. Public Comment; c. Council Action: Close Public Hearing and Act on M&C)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Conduct a public hearing in accordance with Section 212.0021 of the Texas Local Government Code; and
2. Adopt the attached ordinance amending Chapter 7 "Buildings," Article VIII "Floodplain Provisions" of the City Code to regulate valley storage of stormwater citywide.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this Mayor and Council Communication (M&C) is to conduct a public hearing pursuant to Texas Local Government Code section 212.002 and adopt an ordinance revising Chapter 7, Article VIII, Floodplain Provisions of the City Code of the City of Fort Worth (2015), as amended, (the Floodplain Ordinance) to regulate valley storage of stormwater citywide. Valley storage refers to the capacity of a watercourse or sump to temporarily hold floodwater during storm events within the floodplain. This storage reduces how quickly and how much water flows downstream, helping to lessen flooding and potential damages.

In 2020, the Stormwater Management Division of the Transportation and Public Works Department ("Stormwater") began an initiative to determine the cumulative impacts of development and redevelopment to watersheds from increases in impervious cover and loss of valley storage. Stormwater began this initiative due to the increased number of complaints about flooding impacts from development of all sizes. The purpose of the regulation updates is to maintain floodplain valley storage and in turn reduce the increased flood risk to homes, businesses, and roads which result from the cumulative impact of development and filling allowed in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain.

Currently the City of Fort Worth (City) regulates valley storage along the Trinity River Corridor, including the Clear Fork, West Fork and sumps along the river. Outside of those areas, the Floodplain Ordinance allows for floodplain storage areas to be filled for a given project without compensatory storage so long as the floodplain water surface elevation resulting from the given project does not increase beyond thresholds set forth by the FEMA and City floodplain and stormwater criteria. Compensatory valley storage ensures that when development fills or raises land in a floodplain, an equal volume of flood storage is created somewhere nearby to offset what was lost, and maintain the capacity of the floodplain to store flood waters.

A case study was completed on the White's Branch watershed to quantify the magnitude of impacts on flood risk due to loss of valley storage in natural streams. The results confirmed that loss of valley storage increased flood risk downstream, particularly for more frequent storm events.

Following completion of the case study, Stormwater Management staff formed a stakeholder group in Spring 2023 to evaluate potential refinements to current development regulations considering the findings of the case study. The stakeholder group consisted of internal staff from different City departments and external stakeholders representing the development community, engineers, and residents. City staff maintained extensive stakeholder engagement to identify and work through questions and concerns associated with the recommended regulation. The Development Advisory Committee (DAC), DAC Stormwater Subcommittee, and Law Department staff were key participants in this effort. On October 16, 2025, the DAC voted to recommend the valley storage ordinance updates be brought to City Council for adoption.

The recommended ordinance updates will establish compensatory valley storage regulations for all development within the city's watercourses and sumps. These regulations include:

- No loss (0.0%) of valley storage for 1-, 5-, and 100-year storm events
- Require valley storage analysis for any proposed fill within the 100-year FEMA floodplain
- Provide allowed exceptions, including, but not limited to infrastructure maintenance and repair, bank stabilization activities, utility crossings, outfall structures, and city constructed roadways.

If adopted, the proposed Compensatory Valley Storage ordinance shall take effect on February 1, 2026. A public hearing is required under Section 212.002 of the Texas Local Government Code because the proposed ordinance will impose additional rules governing plats and subdivisions in order to promote public safety and the safe development of the City of Fort Worth.

In accordance with Section 212.0021 of the Texas Local Government Code, notice of the public hearing on the proposed ordinance was published in the Fort Worth Star Telegram on Wednesday, November 12, 2025.

A Form 1295 is not required because: This M&C does not request approval of a contract with a business entity.

FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:

The Director of Finance certifies that approval of these recommendations will have no material effect on City funds.

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Expedited